

"HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR!"

[This article, excepting the paragraphs printed below, was reprinted in issue of December 1, 1903, which please see.]

[A Canadian journal, *The Expositor of Holmess*, reached our table as we finished this article. We extract a few statements from one of its leading articles which show how blind are both the writer and the Editor respecting *true holmess* and a gospel faith in Christ. Ignoring the fact of the fall of the race in Adam, and of our consequent imperfection, because we are his off-spring, born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Rom. 5:12, Psal. 51:5), the redemption accomplished by Jesus our Lord, and our *justification*, by faith in his blood are not seen. This is the seducing spirit and tendency of our times, part of the "doctrine of devils"—no fall, no death, no ransom; Christ merely a pattern, salvation by *works*, following Christ's example, crucifying your own sins in your own flesh, as he crucified sin in his flesh (?)—"in whom was no sin," who was

"holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." We quote:—
"Because Jesus lived right, men imagine that they can substitute his life for theirs when they come to be judged. . . . They have carved out the beautiful fiction that God will look only upon Jesus' life instead of upon theirs. He will see that Jesus' life was very good,—that Jesus' life pleased him, and therefore he will look only upon Jesus. . . . Therefore they expect to come up for judgment . . . with shortcomings, with failures, with infirmities of the flesh, with sins of omission, with sins of commission, and expect God's divine favor, by this substitutionary process,—God looking upon Jesus. . . . The only atonement God will have anything to do with is based on righteousness,—that we should live right—If a man's deed's be righteous he will escape condemnation."]

SENATOR PEFFER'S FOREVIEW

Speaking in the United States Senate, on January 21st, Senator Peffer gave evidence of having the eyes of his understanding somewhat open, respecting what is coming. He is reported to have used the following language:

"A day of retribution is coming—a day of reckoning is nigh at hand. The people will smite their enemy. In their

wrath this great crime will be avenged. Standing as I do in the night of the Nineteenth century, and looking toward the dawn of the Twentieth, I see coming a wave of fire and blood. I pray God that it may spend its force on the sea. Behind me is Rome, and before, God alone in his infinite wisdom knows what is in store."

THE BOOK OF GENESIS—II

ITS OBJECT, AND ITS RELATION TO THE DIVINE CANON

The object of the book is to reveal to us the material universe, man's origin and relation to God the Creator, and the equality of all men before him, the divinely constituted relation of the sexes, the origin of moral and physical evil; the primeval history of the human race, and the origin of nations, the selection of one as the depository of the sacred records, and of the divine purpose and method for man's redemption, the history of its ancestral founders, and then relation to its subsequent history, etc.

Of these truths, to the knowledge of which we owe the present advancement in civilization, it is the object of the book to furnish a divinely accredited record. Its value is apparent on the face of the above statement, and is attested by the history of civilization. In these truths, and the divine attestation of them, lies the only basis of popular progress, and of permanent national prosperity; and on all these we should be in the profoundest ignorance, without the revelations contained in this book.

Aubelen, in his defense of the Scriptures as a divine revelation, has the following just thoughts on the historical value of these eleven chapters: "If we had not the first eleven chapters of Genesis, if we had, on the beginnings of the world and of humanity, only the myths of the heathen, or the speculations of philo-sophers, or the observations of naturalists, we should be in the profoundest darkness concerning the origin and nature of the world and of man. It is with these chapters on the one side as with the prophecies of Scripture on the other. There we get the true light on the first, here on the last things—there on the foundation principles, here on the ultimate tendencies of history; there on the first cause, here on the object of the world; without which a universal history, or a philosophy of history, is impossible. But prophecy itself also has its roots in these chapters, on which all later revelation plants itself. Happily, these primeval records of our race far more widely than we are aware, have penetrated our whole mode of thinking, and sway even those who believe they must reject the historical character of these accounts. These chapters maintain the consciousness, in humanity, of its own God-related nature, of its original nobility and its eternal destination"

From this results its relation to the divine canon. Its teachings are presupposed in all subsequent revelations, and are assumed to be known to the reader. Passing allusions are made to them, in which they are recognized as known; but no formal, full and connected statement of them is elsewhere made, as though it were not already done and familiar to the reader. The ground-truths, on which the whole structure of religious teaching rests, are assumed to have been already taught—such, for example, as the relation of the material world to the Supreme Being, who created it out of nothing, and who therefore controls all the forces of its elements, brought into existence by him, and hence subject to his will; the relation of man to the Being who created him, and who therefore has a sovereign right to control the use of the powers which he created; a right paramount to that of the creature himself, who possesses these powers by the gift of him who

brought them into being; the cause of the moral and physical evils that universally prevail, throughout the world and among all races and generations of men; the inviolable sanctity of human life in every individual, until forfeited by his own violation of it in another; the initiatory steps for perpetuating the knowledge of the true God, and for carrying into effect the divine plan for the redemption of the race.

These are the ground-work of all subsequent teachings, and all of them are assumed as known.

Moreover, the histories of various personages, treated of here in their minutest details, are often referred to as already known; so that no part of subsequent revelation could be understood, without a familiar acquaintance with this book.

The book first reveals God's relation to the universe, and to its sentient and intelligent occupants, as the Creator and rightful Proprietor and Sovereign of all.

It then records the early history and universal corruption of man, and the interposition of divine justice in the destruction of the guilty race.

It then proceeds with the general history of the new race of man, till it becomes manifest that the original lesson is without effect, that the tendency to evil is innate and universal, and that there is no power of self-renovation.

It then records the initiatory steps of the divine arrangement for the renovation of man, and for perpetuating the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Thenceforward it is occupied with the personal history of the family, in whom and their descendants the divine purpose was to be carried into effect. In the details of their history, as in the subsequent history of the nation, it is made evident that the wonderful truths of which they were the depository did not originate from themselves, but were divinely communicated. If an intellectual and philosophic people, such as the Greeks for example, with a capacity for acute and metaphysical speculation, had been selected as the depository of these truths, it might with more show for reason be maintained that they originated in the tendencies of the national mind. But how should the pure monotheism of the Hebrew Scriptures, the doctrine of the One Eternal God, have originated with a people ever prone to idolatry? And whence was that light which illuminated Palestine, a mere patch on the earth's surface, while all other nations, the world around, were enveloped in darkness? And whence were those conceptions of God and his attributes sung by Psalmists and Prophets, and now the ground-work of the highest civilization to which man has ever attained, while Homer and Hesiod were singing of the gods of Olympus and the mythic fables of the Theogony? He who believes that the unphilosophical and unlearned Hebrews outstripped the most intellectual and wisest nations of antiquity, put to shame their learning and philosophy, and have become the instructors of the most enlightened nations of modern times, believes a greater wonder than the divine inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In this plan of the book there is a manifest unity of design, indicating a special purpose and aim in its composition.

It should be observed of this, as of every other part of

the divine volume, that it is not a declaration of abstract principles, or of abstract truths, which convince without moving. It takes hold on the life, through its details of life, and influences action by showing the power and tendencies of principles in action. The minuteness of its details of every-

day life is therefore in harmony with its spirit and purpose, as it is with all other parts of the divine Word; and on these depend its power, instrumentally, as an element in progressive civilization.

—T. J. Conant.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

I. QUAR., LESSON VI. FEB. 11, GEN. 17:1-9.

Golden Text—"He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."—Gen. 15:6.

God had promised to make a definite covenant with Abram before he left his native land, Haran. (Gen. 12:1-4) He actually made that covenant after Abram had complied with the conditions and come into the land of Canaan. (Gen. 12:6, 7) And now, in the words of this lesson, we find God encouraging Abram's faith by amplifying and explaining that covenant, and counseling him to continue to keep his heart in the proper attitude to receive such favors, saying, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will perform my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

The covenant was to give all "the land of Canaan" to Abram and to his seed for an everlasting possession. The terms of the covenant clearly indicate an earthly inheritance, an inheritance of that which Abram actually saw with his natural eyes. And Abraham (for his name was here changed as a confirmation of the covenant) believed the word of the Lord, and never relaxed his faith, even to his dying day; for, says Paul, he "died in faith, not having received the promises; but, having seen them afar off, he was persuaded of them and embraced them" (Heb. 11:13), although, during his past life, as Stephen said, "God gave him none inheritance in the land; no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."—Acts 7:5.

That was indeed a remarkable covenant, and a wonderful manifestation of the favor of God toward his faithful servant Abraham; and it was a remarkable faith on the part of Abraham which was able to grasp and appreciate a promise whose realization must be beyond the floods of death; and extending to a posterity so numerous as to be beyond hope of reckoning.

But, great as was Abraham's faith, there was a feature of that covenant of which it was impossible for him to have the slightest conception; for it was to have both a literal and an anti-typical fulfilment. This we are enabled to see from subsequent divine revelations through the Apostle Paul, who shows that the seed of Abraham was to be understood in two senses: that there was to be a natural seed, an Israel after the flesh (1 Cor. 10:18), and a spiritual seed, "which seed is Christ" (Head and body): "and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's [antitypical] seed and heirs of the [antitypical]

promise" (Gal. 3:7, 29), which includes a much more glorious inheritance than the earthly possessions of the fleshly seed, rich indeed though their portion will be: for Christ is the heir of all things, and those who are Christ's are heirs together with him of all things. All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's, who created all things by and for his well beloved Son.—Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; Col. 1:16.

A hint of this double significance of the promise to Abraham was given for our benefit in the illustrations which God gave of his numerous posterity. They were to be as the sand by the sea-shore and as the stars of heaven (Gen. 22:17)—the former an apt illustration of the fleshly, and the latter of the spiritual seed.

Let all those who are of the faith of Abraham mark these precious promises and follow them up until, the eyes of their understanding being opened, they see by faith the city established for which Abraham looked, the city which hath foundations, the glorious Kingdom of God in both its earthly and heavenly phase. (Heb. 11:9, 10. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., Chap. xiv.) The prophet Micah describes its coming glory (Micah 4:1-7) and says that, when the children of Abraham do thus come into possession of the land, they shall rest there in peace; for the nations shall have beaten their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they have war any more. Then "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." And we believe it, because we are of the faith of Abraham, and know that all that the Lord has promised he is able to perform.

And not only so, but today we stand upon the very threshold of that new dispensation—the Millennial reign of Christ, when all of these things are shortly to be fulfilled—when Abraham himself shall return from the captivity of death (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18), when his natural seed also shall return and possess the land; and when God will take away their stony hearts and give them a heart of flesh and enable them to keep his covenant and to walk before him with a perfect heart and make them indeed a channel of blessing to all the families of the earth. (Ezek. 11:19, 20) See MILLENNIAL DAWN VOLS. I & II.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON SODOM

I. QUAR., LESSON VII., FEB. 18, GEN. 18:22-33.

Golden Text—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—Gen. 18:25.

The subject of this lesson is an important one, though the limits assigned do not cover the event, which includes all of chapter 18, and chapter 19:1-28. Though the narrative is familiar to every Bible reader, its lessons have been very generally overlooked.

Before considering these it is well to note, in corroboration of our observations on lesson iv., concerning the ministration of angels prior to the beginning of the law dispensation, (1) how promptly they were recognized by those to whom they appeared. Although these appeared in human form, Abraham very quickly recognized them as more than human, and honored them accordingly. So also Lot recognized them; and, because he honored them as the messengers of the Lord, he sought to protect them from the Sodomite mob, even at the expense of his virgin daughters if need be. But while Abraham and Lot recognized them as the angels of God, the men of Sodom thought them to be only men. Nor were Abraham and Lot excited, or in the least disconcerted by the honor of such a visit. They received their remarkable guests with becoming dignity and grace, and with great composure: not with superstitious fear, nor as if it were a thing hitherto unknown; but as a rare occurrence and a special honor.

(2) Note also the expression of one of these heavenly visitants—one of the three representatives of Jehovah, possibly his beloved Son, afterward our Saviour. Speaking for Jehovah, he said, (verse 17), "Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely

become a great and mighty nation." etc.? "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him," says the Psalmist. (Psa. 25:14) Thus it was in Abraham's day, and thus it is still. The Lord does not honor the world, nor the worldly wise, with a knowledge of his secret purposes.—Dan. 12:10, 1 Cor. 1:19, 20; 3:18, 19.

In verses 22-33 we have the account of Abraham's pleading with the Lord for the possible righteous souls that might yet remain in Sodom, and an illustration of the promise that the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (Jas. 5:16) But when not even ten righteous persons were found in Sodom, the four that were found were first gathered out before the visitation of wrath descended on the condemned city; for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry."

Coming now to consider the severe judgment upon Sodom, let us note its prominent lessons carefully—(1) We see that the city was wholly given up to wickedness and the basest immoralities. Not even a strange man was safe in coming among them. Sin had there reached that dreadful enormity to which the Apostle Paul seems to have reference in Rom. 1:18-32. See also Jude 7 and Ezek. 16:49-50. They were sinning, too, against sufficient knowledge from the light of nature, as Paul indicates, so that they were, as he admits, "without excuse."

(2) We observe next that the penalty inflicted upon them was not eternal torment, but a cutting short of the present life with its privileges and advantages. "I took them away as I saw good, saith the Lord." (Ezek. 16:50) And by the

same prophet he declares his intention to bring them back, together with wayward Israel, the children of the covenant, saying, "When I shall bring again the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them. . . . I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger [Samaria and Sodom—Verse 46]. And I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done [which he declares to be worse than Sodom had done—Verses 47, 48], saith the Lord Jehovah."

When the Lord thus declares his purposes, and that in full view and statement of all the circumstances, and signs his name to the document, there is no room left for cavil or doubt. Wicked Sodom and Samaria and Israel and all the families of the earth shall be brought back from the captivity of death—the only captivity which could possibly be referred to here; for this was spoken long after Sodom was laid in ashes. Nor was there a single Sodomite left to perpetuate the name; for it is written that, "the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and *destroyed them all.*" (Luke 17:29; Gen. 19:24, 25) Our Lord also adds his testimony saying, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which *all* that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment"*—trial. (John 5:27-29) And the Apostle Paul states, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."—Acts 24:15

The statement of Jude 7 that "Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." may be thought by some to be at variance with the above quoted scriptures. But not so. The word of the Lord spoken by prophets and apostles and by the Lord Jesus himself must of necessity be harmonious; and any interpretation which does not manifest that harmony must be erroneous. The word "fire" is here used as a symbol of destruction, and the word eternal is from the Greek word *aiônios*, which signifies age-lasting. Thus Sodom and Gomorrah are represented as suffering the vengeance of age-lasting destruction. They were destroyed, says Luke (17:29), and they have remained so ever since, and will so remain until the appointed time for bringing them again from the captivity of death, as declared by the Prophet Ezekiel.

Mark also the statement that these were set forth for an example of God's treatment of the evil doers (See also 2 Pet. 2:6)—an example both of his vengeance and of his mercy. His vengeance was manifested in their destruction; and his mercy is specially manifest in their promised deliverance. God will punish the evil doers, but he will have mercy also. Those who have sinned against a measure of light shall be punished accordingly (Luke 12:48); and those who, during this Gospel age, have been fully enlightened, and who have tasted of the heavenly gift of justification, and been made partakers of the holy spirit, and who have tasted of the good word of God (not its perversion), and the powers (advantages) of the coming age, and have spurned these, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified a common thing (Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-31), will be cut off from life in the second death.

However, the Sodomites and others, though great and shameful sinners, and worthy of many and severe stripes, some of which, at least, were received in their past life, as, for instance, in their fearful overthrow and destruction, were not thus fully enlightened, and consequently were not condemned to the second death, from which there will be no resurrection. And, therefore, even the wicked Sodomites will hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth in due time; for "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one [just and merciful] God, and one mediator between [that just and holy] God [who cannot tolerate sin] and [fallen, sinful] men, the man Christ Jesus [the only begotten and well beloved Son of God, whom God gave to redeem us, because he so loved the world even while they were yet sinners, and] who gave himself in accordance with the Father's plan] a ransom for

all [the Sodomites and all other sinners included],—to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:3-6) And while this testimony was not given to the Sodomites in their day, it is just as sure that they shall have it in the coming age under the Millennial reign of Christ, when they shall come forth to judgment—to a shameful realization of their guilt, and to an opportunity for repentance and reformation.

Our Lord's statement with reference to their future judgment (Matt. 10:14, 15) is also worthy of special note. In sending out his disciples to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of heaven (verse 7), he said it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the city or house that would not receive their message—"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be *more tolerable* for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." The implication is that it will be tolerable for both classes, but less tolerable for those who wilfully reject the light of divinely revealed truth, and thus prefer the darkness to the light, because their deeds are evil (John 3:19, 20), than for those who even sinned egregiously against the dimmer and waning light of nature.

Hear again the Lord's warning to the caviling Jews who had seen his mighty works, but who wilfully refused to admit their testimony of his Messiahship—"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hades [the grave]; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." (Matt. 11:21-24).

Tyre and Sidon had suffered a terrible overthrow in the midst of carnage, pestilence and blood, and Sodom had perished under a deluge of fire and brimstone†; but the more guilty (because more enlightened) Judean cities remained. Why? Because the great day of judgment had not yet come, and except in a very few instances—of which those cited are in point, which were summarily judged and punished before the appointed time for the world's judgment, for examples, as stated—the punishment of evil doers tarries until the appointed time, the Millennial age. Thus it is written, "The sins of some men are previously manifested, leading on to judgment, but in some [instances] indeed they follow after." (1 Tim. 5:24 See also Luke 13:1-5) The Lord points forward to the day of judgment when all the guilty shall receive their just deserts, and when chastened and penitent sinners may return to God.

The judgments of that day will be tolerable for all; and the special revelations of divine truth and the helpful discipline and instruction which were not due in the days of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, but which our Lord says would have led them to repentance, will be given in the coming day of judgment, both to those wicked cities and also to the cities of Judea.

How plainly all these scriptures point to the coming "times of restitution of all things" of which Peter speaks in Acts 3:19-21, saying, "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Then these times of restitution are the times of Christ's second presence; and this work of restitution is the grand object of his predicted thousand years reign on earth; and that must be the day of judgment to which the Lord referred as the time for the "tolerable" discipline and final settlements with Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Chorazin and Bethsaida and all the rest of mankind—the day spoken of by the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:31), saying, "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained [Jesus Christ], whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."

* The Greek word *krisis*, rendered damnation in the common version, does not mean damnation, but a trial or judgment, and is so translated in many places in the New Testament.

† The whole region about Sodom abounds with slime or bitumen pits (Gen. 14:10) sulphur and salt; and the fire was probably from lightning. Thus God used the natural elements with which they were surrounded in accomplishing their destruction.

We rejoice in the blessed testimony thus assured to all men that God, who so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life, hath also appointed a day—a period of a thousand years—in which he will grant to them all a righteous judgment, trial, by him—by that same Son, now risen from the dead—who also so loved us that he freely laid down his life for us all, that thus by the merit of his vicarious sacrifice he might remove the legal disability to our restoration. And we rejoice, too, in the mercy and love and helpfulness vouchsafed

to our sin-sick race by the character of the Judge who has given such ample proof of his love.

He will be a just Judge, laying “justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet;” “a merciful High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities;” a wise and good physician able to apply the healing balm of the tree of life which is for the healing of the nations; and indeed the blessed seed of Abraham in whom “ALL the families of the earth (from Adam to the end) shall be blessed.”

With such blessed assurances, who could doubt that the Judge of all the earth will do right?